

Sinkyone Wilderness State Park
Public Meeting # 3
May 28th, 2003, Needle Rock Visitor Center
4 pm to 8 pm

Approximate Attendance: 45
4 to 5:30 pm Potluck Dinner
5:30 to 8 pm Public Meeting

Steve Horvitz, Eel River Sector Superintendent

- Welcome;
- Introduction of DPR attendees: Roger Goddard, Martin Urbach, Richard Beresford, John Neef, Rich Ruiz, Gary Slatery;
- Introduction of EDAW attendees: Connie Gallippi, Brian Ludwig, Petra Unger;
- Handouts are distributed and explained. They included: summary of comments received at previous public meetings and through mail and online surveys; letters received after the closure of the comment period from several members of the International Mountain Biking Associations (IMBA);
- Summaries are also available on park planning website now;

Roger Goddard, District Landscape Architect

- Thank you for coming out – your presence here shows the community's sincere interest in the planning process;
- The meeting is at Needle Rock to recognize the resource we are planning for and to let that resource speak to us;
- We are here to report back to the community on input we have received and to have you formulate goals for the planning process;
- This is a unique situation, usually DPR collects public input, then starts making planning decisions;
- DPR park staff will go through a similar exercise the following day;
- Explains contents of handouts and nature of exercise;
- The community group will break into smaller groups, and define which comments in the handout are visionary statements (what is the park all about) vs. which ones are management statements (how do we manage the park);
- Breakout groups should then attempt to define a goal for each management statement. This is an important part of planning and one that the public is not typically involved with;
- Humboldt Redwoods General Plan is a recent General Plan example;
- Reads DPR Mission Statement and points out paradox of recreation vs. resource protection as the “age-old dilemma” in park management;
- Tomorrow DPR personnel will discuss the purpose, vision, goals and objectives for the park, and the results from tonight's public meeting will be incorporated;

A member of the public reads scoping comments provided by Richard Ginger who could not attend; Mr. Ginger urges park planners to look closely at the State Wilderness Act;

It is requested that Public Resources Code relating to State Wilderness preservation in general and Sinkyone Wilderness in particular be posted on the Park's planning website; these materials are now available on the website.

Three smaller planning groups were formed among the attendees and each group was assigned 3 topics from the handouts to address during small group discussion. During a hour-long exercise small planning groups sort visionary statement vs. management statements and define goals for each management topic. Results by topic and comments from the larger planning group are provided below.

A large group discussion occurred after the breakout session to share formulated goal statements and to discuss any additional thoughts or comments on the goals. The following issues presented in *italics* represent important points raised during the summary discussion.

Topic: Overall Park Management

Goal: Protect and preserve the solitude and wild character of Sinkyone and expand the wilderness and park-designated lands to the east.

The president of the Piercy Watershed Group shared a regional map that provides a view of adjacent landowners, boundaries, and how the SWSP fits in to the overall regional picture.

Topic: Protection of Natural Resources

Goal: Achieve protection and restoration of natural resources through the use of environmentally friendly and traditional Native American management practices. (No herbicides.)

Prescribed burning is the cause of the resulting landscape we see today. To maintain the landscape in its current state, prescribed burning would continue and be coordinated with adjacent land owners. No herbicides are being used in the park.

Topic: Community Involvement

Goal: Leaving a legacy of a pristine environment for future generations through a broad management coalition consisting of neighboring communities and the ITSWC as equal partners for the stewardship of SWSP and surrounding lands.

Topic: Fire Management

Goal: Protect the wilderness value of the park by developing a comprehensive fire management plan that emphasizes community participation and cooperation, protects the safety, lives, and property of surrounding communities, and reduces fuel in high risk areas while respecting the role of fire in the natural ecosystem. (e.g. summer campfire restrictions)

Whale Gulch is a wind tunnel, which causes fire hazard, smoke, and air quality problems when fires get out of control. Giant “bonfires” at Jones Beach are a problem during the summer months.

Topic: Protection of Cultural Resources

Goal: Protect historic and pre-historic cultural resources and recognize the central role of past and present Native American people in the development and history of Sinkyone Wilderness State Park through cooperation and participation with ITSWC and other Native peoples. Support ownership of the 4-Corners property by the ITSWC.

Topic: Interpretation and Education

Goals: Provide high value interpretive activities that are balanced with the true character of the wilderness area. Restrict the number of groups per year. Community and schools should continue to have on-going programs. ITSWC would like to create a traditional village with natural material for their use and for general interpretation. Park relevance should be obvious in interpretation.

Provide low impact, high value, site-sensitive interpretation and education activities and signage. Create awareness of acceptable park uses by posting information about the park on the internet. Provide a human component to interpretation and add street signs (where appropriate). Maintain a role for local schools; consider traditional Native American structures; park relevance needs to be noted to share information and provide funding; address carrying capacity; restrict the number off groups that use the park in any given year (how do we define a group?); create awareness through programs; have regulations and rules on internet - “the virtual visit”; Needle Rock House is a great place for people interaction; some want no people in their wilderness experience; provide better signs for visitors..

Topic: Facilities

Goals: Maintain existing facilities with no new facilities with the exception of visitors centers at access points (i.e., Piercy, Baker Creek, Usal) to inform visitors prior to entry of wilderness. Keep camp sites primitive. Inform backpackers. Create a position for outhouse maintenance. Continue to develop other points of access with or without acquisitions. Develop visitor centers at points of access to park. Minimize development on north end.

Expose people to educational value without entering the park; where would a visitor center go at Usal? Would volunteer hosts be willing to stay at Usal?

Topic: Roads and Trails

Goals: Maintain Needle Rock Road as-is; develop an erosion control plan for roads; restore trail to Needle Rock beach; restore Wheeler Road to Horse Camp and provide emergency access along for Hotel Gulch Road; maintain and improve Usal Road. Keep some areas open to vehicle access/others for hiking only. Maintain North Wheeler Road to Wolf Creek road as is.

Fire and emergency access issues with closing roads – Usal Road is an important alternative in emergency situation when Highway 101 is closed. Without Usal Road, vase areas remain inaccessible during this situation. SITWC would like to convert Hotel Gulch and Wheeler Road to trails while the local fire commissioner would like to maintain vehicle access for emergencies.

Topic: Recreation

Goals: Provide specific area for OHVs and quads (Usal) that are appropriate to consolidate impact (east of Usal Road – acquire property for OHV facility in previously disturbed areas) to maintain wilderness without mechanized vehicles in the park. Provide season pass for camping.

Off-road vehicles are a problem at Usal beach; either enforce rules or provide a specific place for their use (possibly acquisition); Usal is also used by commercial fishermen. Day-use passes are available and used statewide. Provide a season pass for camping. Yes and No to price cuts for locals.

Steve Horvitz: Thank you for coming – we really appreciate your input into the planning process. Clarifies that the General Plan needs to follow the Department of Park and Recreations state-wide planning guidelines.

Members of the public express their appreciation for the open dialogue between DPR and its neighbors and stakeholders.